



The Winns Primary School

Attendance Policy September 2025

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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 The Governing Body

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

2.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

2.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

2.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with Welfare Officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Allison Tokeley and can be contacted via 0208 527 1872
allison.tokeley@winns.waltham.sch.uk

2.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

2.6 School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Monitor the online absence form twice a day
- Transfer calls from parents to the attendance officer in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

2.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- all the school to report their child's absence before 8.30am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

2.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time
- Ensure they arrive on time

3. Recording attendance

3.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- Any amendment to the attendance register will include:
 - The original entry
 - The amended entry
 - The reason for the amendment
 - The date on which the amendment was made
 - The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:55am each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9am and will be kept open 9.15am. The register for the second session will be taken year groups lunch.

3.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carers must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:30am or as soon as practically possible by completing the absence form on our school website or calling the school office.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carers to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

3.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

This can be reported by completing 'Reporting an absence or appointment' on the school website <https://thewinnprimaryschool.co.uk/> . If you are unable to access the website you can call the school office.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. You are required to complete a 'leave of absence' form for any time off during Term time. This form can be found on the school website or you can get on from the school office.

Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

3.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- all the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may conduct a home visit
Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving other professionals.

3.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels for those children whose attendance falls below 95%. This would be either a telephone call home or in a form of letter. If your child's attendance becomes a concern, you will be invited to an initial attendance meeting with Head teacher and Welfare Officer. During the meeting parents will be offered any support to ensure their child's attendance improves.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 days before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence. If a Leave of Absence request is unauthorised and the pupil is absent, parents/carers may be liable for a Fixed Penalty Notice. See 4.2.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if the school considers there to be exceptional circumstances. Leave of absences are granted at the Headteachers discretion.

All Leave of Absence requests must be applied for in advance by completing a leave of absence form. A form can also be requested from the school office. If a Leave of Absence request is unauthorised and the pupil is absent, parents/carers may be liable for a Fixed Penalty Notice. See 4.2.

4.2 Reducing persistent absence

The Attendance Team regularly monitor attendance and punctuality. They identify patterns and trends in pupil absence and punctuality, including persistent absence, and screen for pupils who fall below our target for attendance.

- Pupils whose attendance is less than 95% parents are spoken to informally and offered support where appropriate. Where attendance does not improve, the parent/carer will receive a formal letter home and if after monitoring there is no improvement parent/carers would be invited to an attendance meeting with the Head teacher and Welfare Officer.
- Attendance targets will be discussed and set for the child and further support and communications strategies will be put in place as necessary.
- Failure to improve rates of attendance will result in BACME (Behaviour and Children Missing Education) becoming involved and referral to Thames magistrates under [Section 444\(1\) Education Act 1996](#) – If the child is absent without authorisation, then the parent is guilty of an offence. This is a strict liability offence i.e. all that needs to be shown is a lack of regular attendance. Sanctions can include a fine of up to £1,000.
- Outcomes of monitoring are fed into and cross referenced with Safeguarding and Child Protection monitoring, Pupil Progress Reviews, parent consultations and general monitoring.

4.3 Legal sanctions

The local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. If a second fine is issued within 3 years the fine will be £160 without a reduction. If a fine is issued on a third occasion within 3 years a prosecution will be sought, with fines up to £2500.

Once a fixed Penalty fine has been issued it cannot be withdrawn unless there is a materialistic error on the referral.

Penalty notices can be issued by a local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether to issue a penalty notice may consider:

- Persistent late arrival at school after the registers close. 10 unauthorised late arrivals within a half term.
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Formal action for 10 unauthorised sessions within a 10-week period. This could be a Notification of Parental Responsibility issued by Local Authority or Fixed Penalty notice.
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason
- If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

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For more information please click [here](#).

Useful Links for Parent and Carers covering new National Framework

<https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2024/02/29/fines-for-parents-for-taking-children-out-of-school-what-you-need-to-know/>

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

- Celebration Assembly- Every Friday the school holds a celebration assembly and awards are issued to classes with excellent attendance and punctuality which develops healthy competition between classes and year groups to improve attendance.
- School Newsletter- This includes reminding parents of our school attendance procedures and includes the highest attendance from each hall.
- All staff in school act as role models to the children and should have excellent attendance and punctuality themselves.
- A welcoming, organised learning environment which supports and celebrates its learners is a key factor in ensuring children enjoy school and attend regularly. All staff ensure that their learning environments are of a high quality. Regular, rigorous environmental audits are carried out by the SLT to ensure this.

6. Attendance monitoring

The Welfare Officer at our school monitors pupil absence on a weekly basis.

If a pupil's absence triggers a concern, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.

If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer a meeting will be arranged to discuss improving attendance.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the governing body.

The Winns Primary School collects and stores attendance data to:

- Track the attendance of individual pupils
- Identify whether there are groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as needing intervention and support

6.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether there are groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the

national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

6.2 Analysing attendance:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

6.3 Using data to improve attendance

- Provide regular attendance reports to Head teacher, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

6.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Carry out case work with children whose attendance is in the persistent category. i.e, meetings, letters, telephone call, closer monitoring and any other support that would help improve the attendance.
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum of three years by the Headteacher, at every review, the policy will be approved by the governing body.

8. Elective Home Education

Wherever possible the school will seek to have a meeting with the family and LA when there is a request for elective home education to ensure that there is a smooth transition for the pupil. Schools will notify the Local Authority when parents inform them a child is to be home educated.

If the parent/carer of a child with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has expressed their intention to educate their child at home, local authorities will need to review the plan and work closely with parents/carers. [Home Schooling in Waltham Forest.](#)

9. Children Missing Education

A child missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse or exploitation, child criminal exploitation, radicalisation or mental health problems. Staff will also be alert to signs of children at risk of travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

Effective information sharing between parents, schools and local authorities is critical to ensuring that all children of compulsory school age are safe and receiving suitable education. Attendance, absence and exclusions are closely monitored, and same day checks are undertaken on the first morning of absences.

The DSL will monitor unauthorised absence and take appropriate action including notifying the local authority, particularly where children go missing repeatedly and/or are missing for periods during the school day.

Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat can act as a warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues. The guidance specifies it's important that your school's response to persistently absent pupils and children missing education supports identifying any abuse, and in the case of absent pupils, helps prevent the risks of them becoming a child missing education in future.

10. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

11. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Inactive Codes

H, Y and J. If any service children require Holidays in term time than schools should use the code **C**.

The **J** code has been replaced by a new code **J1** and has changed from and Approved Educational Activity to Authorised Absence.

Other new Codes

- K** Attending education provision arranged by the Local Authority
(set in place by the LA and not the school)
- Q** Unable to attend the school because of access arrangements.
(use this code where the LA has failed to arrange transport for the student, Y1 is used if the organised transport is not available)
- Y1** Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
- Y2** Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
- Y3** Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
- Y4** Unable to attend due to whole school being closed
- Y5** Unable to attend due as pupil is in criminal justice detention
- Y6** Absent in accordance with public health guidance or Law
- Y7** Unable to attend because of other unavoidable Cause
- C** Leave of Absence for exceptional circumstance (Guidance changed for this Code)
- C1** Leave of Absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance (Or employment paid or unpaid, continue to use W for Works Experience)
- C2** Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable

Codes where schools MUST record nature of activity

- B** Attending any other approved educational activity (Not Sporting Activity OR Works Experience)
Examples of nature of activity
 - 1) Attending taster days at college
 - 2) Attending courses at college
 - 3) Attending unregistered alternative provision arranged by the school
- K** Attending education provision arranged by the Local Authority
(A pupil attending a provision arranged by the school should use the code P or **B**)
Examples of natures of provision
 - 1) Attending courses at college
 - 2) Attending unregistered alternative provision such as home tutoring
- Y7** Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause

The DfE has not given any examples for the nature of the unavoidable cause from working together document

